

CASE STUDY 2 - Public Sector Union Leadership (Sworn & Non-Sworn Employees)

Theme: Negotiation, culture stabilization, trust repair, conflict resolution

Tags: Interest-based bargaining, labor relations, leadership alignment

Situation

A California public-sector bargaining unit representing **sworn officers and multiple non-sworn classifications** (facilities, custodial, grounds, trades) faced a decade of strained relationships, grievances, and financial instability.

The organization was entering multiple new Collective Bargaining Agreement cycles with high stakes and low trust between labor and management.

Action

As union president, James:

- Led **five** full CBA negotiations using interest-based bargaining.
- Shifted the culture from adversarial to collaborative.
- Created strategic bargaining frameworks rooted in data, not emotion.
- Facilitated conflict repair between union members and management.
- Handled all major personnel disputes through principled negotiation.
- Ensured accurate budget forecasting and transparent communication.

Result

Across nearly a decade of negotiations:

- **Zero layoffs** - during periods when many agencies downsized.
- **Zero grievances** - organizational conflict was resolved early, relationally, and constructively.
- The bargaining unit **skipped two election cycles**, signaling overwhelming member trust.
- Labor-management relations stabilized, increasing organizational performance and morale.

Consulting Capability Demonstrated

- ✓ Deep experience repairing trust
- ✓ Negotiation between competing interests
- ✓ Cultural stabilization under pressure
- ✓ Data-driven decision support
- ✓ Leadership communication and alignment